

making tracks

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Amtrak Superliners Join State Fleet

Caltrans has acquired two newly rebuilt Amtrak Superliner coach cars to join the California Car fleet. These cars will provide replacement capacity for California Cars that are taken out of service for interior retrofit.

Caltrans contracted with Amtrak to rebuild and repair two Superliner coach cars for use on State-supported trains on the San Joaquins and Capitols. These two coach cars, built in the late 1970s for Amtrak by Pullman-Standard, sustained moderate damage in separate derailments several years ago, and have been in storage at Amtrak's heavy repair facility in Beech Grove, Indiana, awaiting repairs. Rebuild cost for the cars was \$1.5 million and took approximately six months to complete. Cost to acquire new California Cars instead of rehabilitating Superliner coaches would have been

approximately \$2.5 million and it would have taken a minimum of two years to deliver just the first new car.

The rebuilding of the Superliner cars included adding more seats, replacing the windows, overhauling the lavatory and air conditioning systems, a total cleaning of the car, and reconditioning of the car's safety systems such as wheels, brakes and emergency equipment. Locomotive control systems allowing the cars to be used in push-pull operation also were added at this time. The interior fabrics were replaced as well, including new carpet, upholstery and curtains. Other passenger amenities include 120 volt AC outlets and reading lights at each seat. The rebuilt cars wear the same distinctive exterior graphics as the rest of the Amtrak California fleet of cars and locomotives. The Superliner cars have been named "Pacific Grove" and "Pleasant Grove."

Bronte Honored with Amtrak Award



The President's 2007 Service & Safety Award for State Partner

William (Bill) Bronte, Chief, Division of Rail for the California Department of Transportation, has been recognized among state and local leaders across the nation for his outstanding support of Amtrak and his commitment to passenger rail service. Bronte is one of only three people in the nation to receive Amtrak's most prestigious award, the President's 2007 Service & Safety Award for State Partner.

In accepting the award, Bronte noted that Caltrans' success with intercity passenger rail travel "would not have been possible without the active support of State Transportation Director Will Kempton and the Schwarzenegger administration, as well as the dedication of the hard-working staff of the Division of Rail."

Award recipients in the state partner category "demonstrate extraordinary and creative efforts in developing resources to preserve and expand rail service. Recipients must demonstrate leadership in promoting rail service on a state and /or national level."

The California Rail Program, Amtrak's largest state partner, represents approximately 50 percent of all state-supported trains and contributes almost 25 percent of Amtrak's total annual ridership. The state-supported routes – The Capitol Corridor, San Joaquins, and Pacific Surfliner – are three of the top six busiest in the nation.

Amtrak Passengers Save on L.A. Clippers Tickets

Amtrak, Metrolink and LA Metro have teamed up to be the official transportation partners of the Los Angeles Clippers NBA team for the 2007-2008 Season. What this means to Amtrak riders is a nice bit of savings on select home games this season. Amtrak passengers can save up to 20 percent off \$35 and \$85 seats by presenting their Amtrak ticket stubs at the Staples Center box office or by visiting:

www.ticketmaster.com/promo/p3mvtz.



HOME GAMES THAT QUALIFY FOR DISCOUNT

WED.	Jan. 2 7:30 pm	New Orleans Hornets
WED.	Jan. 9 7:30 pm	Orlando Magic
WED.	Jan. 23 7:30 pm	Sacramento Kings
WED.	Feb. 13 7:30 pm	Washington Wizards
WED.	Feb. 27 7:30 pm	Portland Trail Blazers
SAT.	March 8 7:30 pm	Minnesota Timberwolves
SAT.	March 22 7:30 pm	Portland Trail Blazers
TUES.	April 8 7:30 pm	Denver Nuggets



The Napa Valley: Wine and More

Napa is a great place to visit just about anytime of the year. And while you may hear that wine is the big attraction (which it is) you can also find spas, golf, hot air balloon rides, a pleasant trip in the countryside aboard the wine train, plenty of shopping facilities and excellent dining.

Napa is easily accessible by Amtrak California's San Joaquin trains. Four daily San Joaquins will give you an easy trip to the center of Napa. Take northbound train 711, 713, 715 or 717 to Martinez. An Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach will be standing by for a quick, 40-minute trip to Napa. The motorcoach stops at the Napa Wine Train Station and at the downtown VINE Transit Center. When you arrive, you will find accommodations at a large number of Bed & Breakfast Inns, hotels and resorts, many nearby. For complete information on Napa accommodations call the Napa Valley Conference & Visitors Bureau at 707/226-7459 or visit napavalley.com.

You can take the free Downtown Trolley to get around town. You'll travel through charming Victorian neighborhoods to visit the city's highlights. Visit COPIA, the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts, a unique center where you can enjoy films, music, garden programs, lectures, culinary demonstrations and wine tasting. Napa Valley Opera House offers theater presentations, including musical comedy, melodrama or a minstrel show.

And, of course, you will want to visit and enjoy the stunning natural beauty and sample the wine at one or more of the many fine wineries.

The Napa Wine Train offers a pleasant and scenic gourmet dining experience aboard restored 1915-1950 Pullman Dining and Lounge cars. Enjoy brunch, lunch or dinner while the historic train takes you through the Napa Valley countryside. Advance reservations are required and may be made at 800-427-4124 or winetrain.com.

Hot Air Balloons over Napa Valley

San Diego Getaway

Mild weather and a wealth of popular activities make San Diego the perfect destination for a vacation getaway. And a trip to San Diego is even more pleasant when you travel to and from the city on Amtrak California's Pacific Surfliner.

The Amtrak station is in the center of downtown San Diego where you can shop, stroll among many interesting boutiques and restaurants, and walk along the Embarcadero where a number of fine hotels are located. Within walking distance is the Horton Plaza shopping complex, Seaport Village with shops, galleries and restaurants, and the Gaslamp Quarter, where Victorian buildings have been restored and feature arts, crafts, antiques, and other shops.

You will want to visit the Museum of Contemporary Art, which is located next door to the train station in the former Santa Fe Depot baggage building and directly across the street in a new three-story structure. Glass doors in the rear of the foyer of the depot building open directly onto the Amtrak platform. There is a large gallery and a smaller gallery for paintings and sculptures and a room for showing video art. A studio is available for present day artists to work in. The international lineup of artists whose work is at MCASD includes Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Roman de Salvo, Jenny Holzer, Ernesto Neto, Richard Serra and Richard Wright.

You also will want to visit San Diego Zoo, in Balboa Park, with close to 4,000 animals, including polar bears, koalas and pandas. And spend some time at one of the area's many sandy beaches, especially at Mission



Sail Boat on Mission Bay in San Diego

Bay where there are 27 miles of sun-drenched beaches, six designated swimming areas and boating, fishing, water skiing, board sailing and grassy recreation and picnic areas.

Tinkerbell & Disney Princesses Visit Northern California



A touring ice show, Disney on Ice presents Princess Wishes, is scheduled to skate into a number of California cities served by Amtrak San Joaquins. Tinkerbell represents the magic of Disney as she whisks the audience through a collection of enchanting and beloved Disney stories. See how dreams and wishes really can come true through the experiences of Cinderella, Jasmine, Snow White and others.

The show appears at the Selland Arena, Fresno, February 6-10; Arco Arena, Sacramento, February 13-18; HP Pavilion, San Jose, February 27-March 2; and, Oracle Arena, Oakland, March 5-9. Tickets may be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com. Check San Joaquins schedules for convenient trains to and from the show or visit www.amtrak.com.

Yosemite-in-a-Day Tour Packages Still Available

Key Holidays has recently become the sole vendor of Yosemite-in-a-Day tours for Amtrak travelers wishing to book an all-inclusive single or multiple day travel package to the Park. Key Holidays of Walnut Creek, California may be contacted directly at www.keyholidays.com or by phone Mondays through Fridays, 9AM to 5:30PM (PST) at 1-800-783-0783 or 1-925-945-8938.

Amtrak passengers arriving from the north can enjoy a day tour and an overnight tour. The day tour includes train travel to Merced, motorcoach transfer to the Park, a tour of the valley, a souvenir book and lunch at the Yosemite Lodge Cafeteria. The overnight tour includes accommodations at the Yosemite Lodge. Passengers arriving from the south must book an overnight tour because train schedules do not permit a day-only tour.

Winter is a special time in the Park offering activities for the whole family. Enjoy ice skating, snow boarding, skiing, or just soak up the quiet solitude of snow-draped trees and meadows. Nothing surpasses the beauty of Yosemite National Park in winter, so gather up the family, make your reservations and get ready to enjoy the trip of a lifetime.

Big Winter Ridership Surge On State Supported Trains

Ridership on the state-supported Amtrak California trains – San Joaquins, Pacific Surfliner and Capitol Corridor – exceeded all expectations during the final quarter of 2007 with an increase of 7.7 percent. A total of 1,266,751 passengers used the popular intercity trains, compared to 1,183,150 during the same three-month period in 2006.

Quarterly ridership gains for Capitol Corridor trains were 11.5 per cent, 4.6 per cent for Pacific Surfliner trains, and 7.1 per cent for the San Joaquins. Of particular note is the growth on the Amtrak San Joaquins, posting monthly increases of 13.1 percent and 11.3 percent in November and December respectively. Ridership on the three state-supported routes during Amtrak's 2007 Fiscal Year was 4.9 million passengers – a record for the three state routes.

Under Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, rail funding for Caltrans' intercity passenger rail program has grown to \$79 million annually, making it the largest state-supported program in the nation.

Free Safety Lesson Plans

A new tool to educate children on how to be safe around railroad tracks is now available for parents and teachers. Operation Lifesaver, a non-profit organization that focuses on rail safety, provides free lesson plans for teachers and safety tips for families on www.oli.org. Just click on the Educational Resources section to find lesson plans that meet national standards for grade K-12. Parents can also print out activity sheets for their families and can review safety information.

Every year there are approximately 300 incidents on California's railroad right-of-ways, virtually all of them preventable. You can keep your students and family safe by using these tips.

An Operation Lifesaver volunteer can also provide an age appropriate presentation to your class or community group for free. To schedule a free presentation, you may contact 877-TAP-CAOL. And always remember to Look, Listen & Live.



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Governor

Business, Transportation &
Housing Agency
Dale E. Bonner, Secretary

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making tracks

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